



Montana

Department of Labor and Industry

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(HELENA) --- UNEMPLOYMENT RATE INCREASES TO 4.2%

(HELENA) --- The state seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased for the fifth consecutive month to 4.2% in May, up 0.4 percent from the April level of 3.8 percent. The national unemployment rate increased half a percentage point over the month to 5.5 percent in May.

"The May employment figures suggest that national economic woes are slowing employment growth in Montana," says Labor Commissioner Keith Kelly. "High gas prices have slowed employment growth in the wholesale and transportation industries, while a slowdown in housing growth has lowered employment levels for self-employed construction workers. Payroll construction employment, however, is still growing."

While the total number of Montanans who are working, including agricultural and self-employed workers decreased by 2,945 in May on a seasonally adjusted basis; seasonally adjusted non-farm payroll employment increased by 600 jobs over the month. On a non-seasonally adjusted basis, Montana added 558 total jobs (including agricultural and self-employed workers).

The seasonally adjusted consumer price index (CPI-U) also posted large increases for the month of May. The CPI-U increased by 0.6 percent between April and May, lead by a 4.4 percent increase in energy prices. The price levels for all items less food and energy, also called core inflation, rose 0.2 percent.

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rates for surrounding states are 2.9 percent for South Dakota, 3.3 percent for North Dakota, and 3.6 percent in Idaho.

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**Unemployment figures are seasonally-adjusted. Seasonally-adjusted numbers remove the effects of events that follow a more or less regular month-to-month pattern each year. These adjustments make nonseasonal patterns easier to identify. The margin of error for the unemployment rate is plus or minus 0.8 percentage points at the 90 percent confidence level. All questions relating to the calculation of unemployment rates should be directed to the Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Research and Analysis Bureau.*

The May 2008 Labor Situation Report will be released on Friday, June 20, 2008.

******* INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET *******

Monthly labor force information for Montana counties are available at:

<http://www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/cgi/dataanalysis/?PAGEID=94&SUBID=205>

Monthly Montana industry employment information is available at:

<http://www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/cgi/dataanalysis/?PAGEID=94&SUBID=199>

Annual labor force data for Indian Reservations in Montana are available at:

www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/?PAGEID=67&SUBID=121